

## **CAPSULE SUMMARY**

**BA-1081**

**432 E. Pennsylvania Avenue**

**East Towson, Baltimore County**

**1920-1935**

**Private**

The twin dwelling at 432 East Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed between 1920 and 1935 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures.

This Colonial Revival wood frame dwelling is sited on a level grassy lot surrounded by mature trees and shrubs. It is two-and-a-half stories in height, four bays wide with a side gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. It sits on a solid parged foundation and is re-clad with German vinyl siding. It is double-pile and has a one-story porch across the façade with a half-hipped roof. Half is supported with the original Tuscan paneled posts and a continuous wood frame balustrade. The eastern half of the porch has replacement square wood posts and balusters. The windows on the façade are paired with 6/6 double-hung vinyl sashes on the eastern section and 1/1 double-hung vinyl sashes on the western section. The left wood door is a replacement, whereas the right door is a Craftsman-style multi-light door. Above both doors are one-light transoms. There are two gable wall dormers on the façade each with an eight-light fixed window, and a closed pediment. The side elevations have a half-hipped roof oriel with a paired window. The original windows in the eastern section are 6/1 double-hung wood sashes. There are elliptical windows in the gable ends, in addition to, heavy molded wood cornice returns.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA- 1081

### 1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

historic

other

### 2. Location

street and number 432 E. Pennsylvania Avenue

not for publication

city, town Baltimore

vicinity

county Baltimore County

### 3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Stanley T. and Celestine Bess

street and number 432 E. Pennsylvania Avenue

telephone Not Available

city, town Towson

state MD

zip code 21286

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse

liber 11601 folio 227

city, town Towson

tax map 70

tax parcel 266

tax ID number 919391670

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☐ Other:

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	1
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Total
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			1

## 7. Description

Inventory No. BA- 1081

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Constructed between 1925 and 1935, this Colonial Revival twin dwelling is sited on a level grassy lot surrounded by mature trees and shrubs. It is two-and-a-half stories in height, four bays wide with a side gable roof. It sits on a solid parged foundation, and the wood frame construction is re-clad with German vinyl siding. The double-pile dwelling features a one-story porch across the full-width of the façade with a half-hipped roof. Half of the porch is supported with the original Tuscan paneled posts and a continuous wood frame balustrade. The eastern half of the porch the supports have been replaced with square wood posts and balusters. The wood porch floor is original. The windows on the façade are paired with 6/6 double-hung vinyl sashes on the eastern section and 1/1 double-hung aluminum sashes on the western section. The left wood door is a replacement, whereas the right door is Craftsman-style multi-light door. Above both doors are one-light transoms. There are two gable wall dormers on the façade each with an eight-light fixed window, and a closed pediment. The side elevations have a half-hipped roof oriel with a paired window. The original windows in the eastern section are 6/1 double-hung wood sashes. There are elliptical windows in the gable ends, in addition to, heavy molded wood cornice returns. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. BA- 1081

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

**Specific dates** 1925-1935 **Architect/Builder** Unknown

**Construction dates** 1925-1935

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The house at 432 East Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed between 1925 and 1935 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. East Towson is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically the pre-Civil War development of an African-American neighborhood in a predominately white community. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Several of the freestanding structures in East Towson are twin dwellings, surreptitiously providing multiple-family housing on narrow rectangular building lots typically occupied by single-family houses. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA- 1081

- Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland.* Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.  
Baltimore County Historic Inventory.  
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.  
*Map of Baltimore County.* Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.  
Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.  
Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .05 Acre  
Acreage of historical setting Unknown  
Quadrangle name Towson Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The house is located at 432 East Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson in the Ninth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with Tax Map 70, Parcel 266 since its construction between 1925 and 1935.

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	K. Baynard, R. Weidlich, J. Bunting, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Incorporated	date	November 28, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

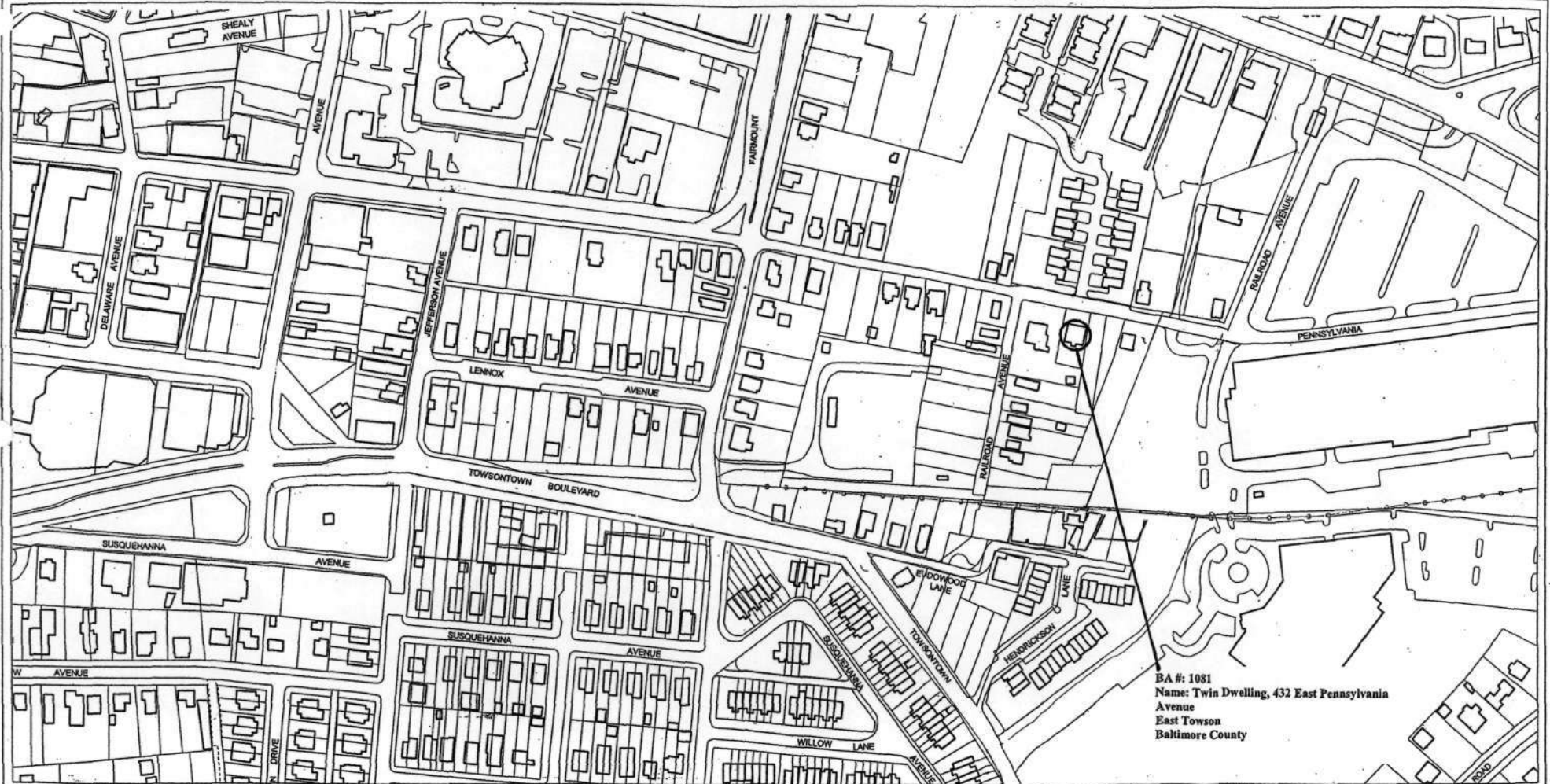
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

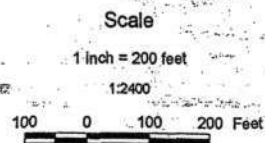
return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600



# East Towson: Planimetric Data



Prepared by:  
Baltimore County Office of Planning  
401 Bosley Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204  
June, 2001



## Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Paved Parking / Driveways
- Hydrographic Features
- Buildings
- Vegetation

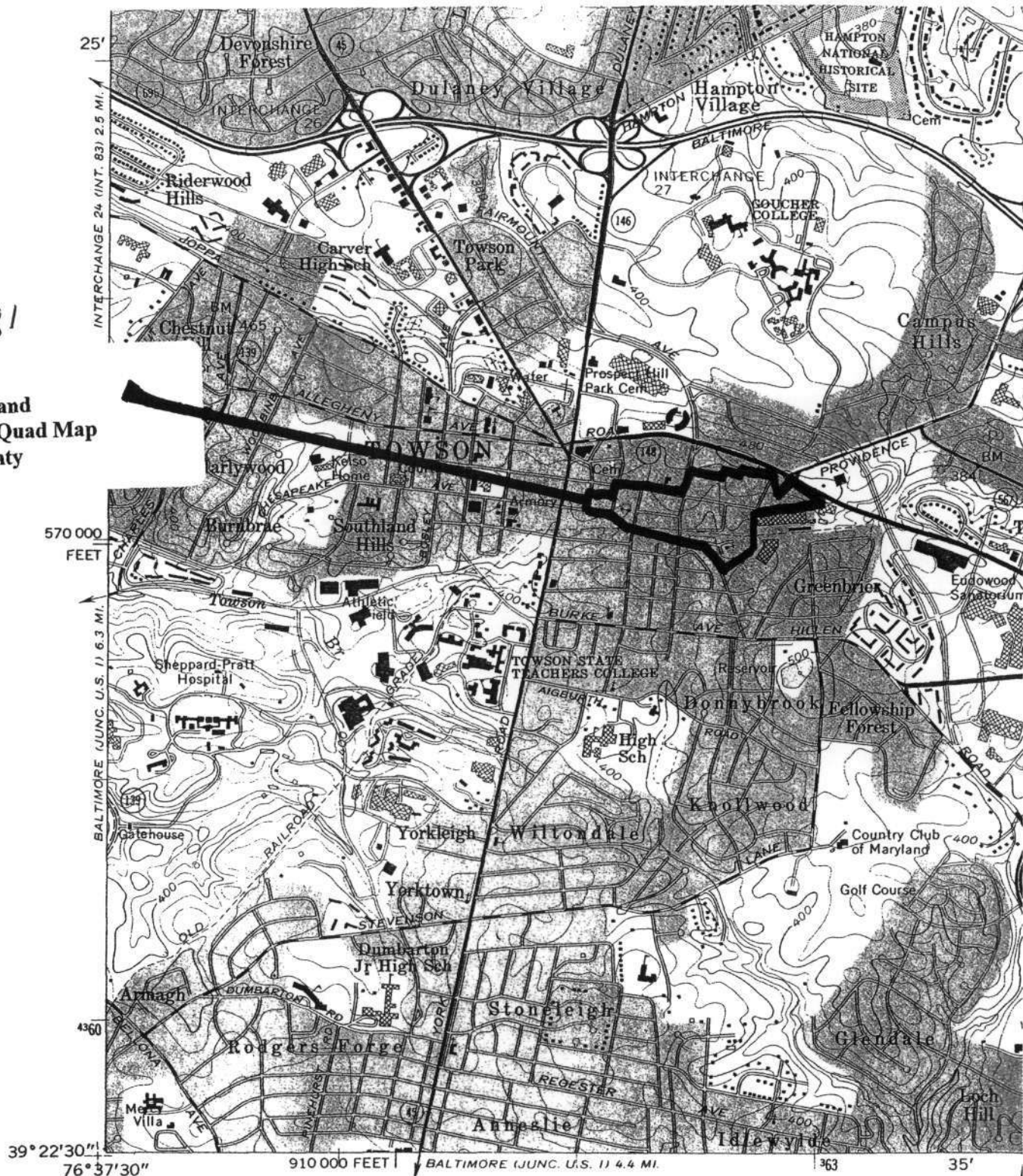
Data Sources:  
Planimetric Data: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)  
Parcel Boundaries: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)  
Study Area: Baltimore County Office of Planning (1:2400)

Coordinate System:  
Maryland State Plane: NAD83/91 Horizontal Datum  
Elevations in Feet: NAVD88 Vertical Datum

Date of Data Capture: March 1996  
Scale of Data Capture: 1" = 100'

BA-1081

East Towson  
Towson, Maryland  
Towson USGS Quad Map  
Baltimore County



(BALTIMORE WEST)  
5662 1 SW

Mapped by the Army Map Service  
Edited and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland  
Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps

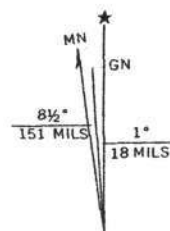
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs  
taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944  
Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system  
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only  
landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from  
aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not  
field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET





BA-1081

TWIN DWELLING, 432 E. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE  
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRALERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

NORTH ELEVATION

1.F3



BA-1081

TWIN DWELLING, 432 E. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE  
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPO

NORTHEAST CORNER

2 of 3

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

JOHNSON DUPLEX HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

430-432 E. Pennsylvania Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

VICINITY OF Baltimore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland 21204

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Ruth E. Johnson (430)

George A. Sides (432)

Telephone #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

---

430-432 E. Pennsylvania Avenue

Frame duplex house, 2-1/2 storeys in Queen Ann Style, brown wood shingles, gable roof, dormers, lunettes in gable ends, four bays wide, good condition.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY



## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

BA-1081

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES After 1923

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Mr. John McGrain

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore Co. Office of Planning &amp; Zoning

STREET &amp; NUMBER

County Courts Building

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY OR TOWN

Towson

DATE

5/15/78

TELEPHONE

823-1849

STATE

Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438